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Record Number of Nursing Majors Interning this Spring

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Record Number of Nursing Majors Interning this Spring

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Even in an academic program with a 100 percent job placement record, nursing seniors at Illinois Wesleyan University are engaging in more direct patient care through internships to stand out in a competitive job market.

This academic year more than 50 percent of the **School of Nursing's** Class of 2014 will complete an optional academic internship, the highest percentage in the school's history, according to Vickie Folse, director. Academic internships require a minimum of 120 hours of course work in a semester.

Folse attributes the increased interest to students' awareness of a competitive job market. An academic intern brings his or her entire skill set of classroom knowledge and clinical patient care to a semester-long experience in a specific area such as pediatrics or critical care, Folse said.

Academic internships allow nursing majors the opportunity to determine if a specific career path is one they would like to pursue. Academic internships also provide students with an opportunity for more realistic perspectives on patient care, Folse said. Clinical instruction occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays and usually ends by 5 p.m. Academic internship direct patient care, however, may occur on the weekends, during 12-hour shifts or during multiple consecutive workdays.

"These academic internships give students a direct patient care perspective that they wouldn't get being on an assigned unit for a single day of the week," said Folse.

She noted the increasing number of nursing internships would not be possible without the on-site supervisors at organizations such as Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria and Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana.

"These master's prepared nurses on site are working with the next generation of nurses over and above what they do as part of their paid positions," said Folse. "They receive no salary for this extra work, but we are so delighted to have these practice partners who are willing to host our students over and above their clinical experiences."



Jennifer Stouffer, RN, (left) works with nursing students Jenna Ducharme '14 and Erin McMahon '14 during the students' academic internship at Children's Hospital of Illinois.

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